

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A content broker hosting service module comprising:
a network interface permitting data communication over a network with third party content providers;
a content broker module that communicates with the third party content providers via the network interface to acquire content and associated digital rights license keys;
a device profile table including a device type of a media device and at least one type of media that can be played on the media device; and
a storage device for storing purchased content on behalf of a user;
2. The content broker hosting service module of claim 1, further comprising a media asset table, including, for each of a plurality of media elements, a unique identifier, a title, a category, a media type, a media characteristic, usage rights, a license key, a purchase date, a distributor purchase ID, a distributor unique content ID, and a distributor identifier.
3. The content broker hosting service module of claim 1, further comprising a single sign-on identity service, capable of maintaining user accounts and authentication credentials including password and biometric information to facilitate federation of the sign-on by third party sites.
4. The content broker hosting service module of claim 1, further comprising a web server that aggregates content titles from third parties and offers content identified by the content titles to the user.
5. The content broker hosting service module of claim 1, wherein the network interface uses standard web services protocols to communicate with the third party content providers.

6. The content broker hosting service module of claim 1, wherein the third party content providers use single sign-on credentials to determine the user's subscription to a hosting service and initiate requests to obtain user and device profile information.

7. The content broker hosting service module of claim 6, wherein the content broker module receives media information, media file content, and rights usage license keys in response to a content purchase request by the user.

8. A method of distributing content using a hosting service, the method comprising:

providing a login to the hosting service using a single sign-on account, the hosting service supporting browsing of content titles aggregated from one or more content provider web sites;

responding to a user purchase request for a selected content title;

communicating with at least one of the content provider websites to request to purchase a copy of content associated with the selected content title;

providing user device characteristics so that at least one content provider website may determine a media format for delivery;

receiving media characteristics including media type and fidelity, along with content data and digital rights license keys;

storing the media characteristics in a media asset table at the hosting service; and optionally downloading the content to a requested user device.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the content is adaptable with regard to media format, resolution, fidelity, or bit rate to accommodate a second device without reacquiring the content from a content provider website.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the hosting service obtains a new license key and notifies the content provider website of receipt of the new license key for billing purposes.

11. A method of processing a remote command from a third party site to facilitate direct ordering in conjunction with content broker services, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a third party site inquiring as to the authenticity of a subscriber using a single sign-on identifier to access the third party site;
receiving notification of a purchase request at a content broker site from the third party site;
receiving a request from the third party site regarding device characteristics of a subscriber device;
transmitting device information relating to the device characteristics;
receiving media information including media type, size, license key, and media content; and
storing the media information in a media asset table.

12. The method of processing a remote command of claim 11, wherein the device information includes screen resolution computing capabilities, storage available, and audio capabilities.

13. The method of processing a remote command of claim 11, further comprising storing a copy of the media content.

14. The method of processing a remote command of claim 11, further comprising downloading the media content to a requested device of the subscriber in response to the third party site.

15. A method of processing a request from a content service user, the method comprising:

- receiving a request from the user to replace a media file;
- scanning a media asset table to determine a supplier of the media file;
- communicating a purchase date, content identifier, and original license key to the supplier of the media file;
- informing the user of charges associated with re-obtaining the media file;
- receiving the media file and a new license key from the supplier of the media file;
- and
- updating the media asset table with an updated purchase date, content identifier, usage rights, and the new license key.

16. A system to provide a content brokerage service, the system comprising:

- an interface to a distributed computer network, the distributed computer network providing access to a remote content provider;
- a content broker module coupled to the interface;
- a single sign-on identity service to authenticate a subscriber to a content brokerage service supported by the content broker module; and
- a memory including content asset information and device profile information associated with at least one subscriber to the content brokerage service.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the content broker module facilitates a distribution of an updated license key and content to the at least one subscriber.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the content broker module requests the remote content provider to distribute the updated license key and the content.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the content broker module receives a request from the at least one subscriber for the updated license key.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the at least one subscriber provides notification to the content brokerage service that an original content file is no longer available for use before the content broker module receives the request for the updated license key.

21. The system of claim 16, wherein the device profile information includes a first device identification of a first device, a first device type of the first device, and a first supported media type for the first device.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the device profile information further includes a device characteristic of the first device and a memory address to identify a free memory block suitable to store distributed content data.

23. The system of claim 16, wherein the content asset information is a media asset table including a media asset identity, a media asset title, a media asset category, a media type, usage rights, and a license key.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the media asset table further includes purchase data and a content distributor identity.

25. The system of claim 16, wherein the content asset information is a media asset table that includes a plurality of content asset entries, each of the plurality of content asset entries including a content title and a license key.

26. The system of claim 16, wherein the remote content provider communicates with the content broker module to indicate a content purchase request made on behalf of the at least one subscriber.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the content broker module accesses the memory to retrieve the device profile information.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the content broker module communicates the device profile information to the remote content provider.

29. A method of managing content, the method comprising:
receiving a request for modified content with respect to a first version of content distributed to a user;
determining a content provider associated with the first version of content;
communicating data to the content provider, the data associated with the distribution of the first version of content;
communicating a modified content request to the content provider; and
receiving a second version of the content and a second license key associated with use of the second version of the content.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising retrieving the data from a media asset table to determine the content provider associated with the first version of the content.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising storing data associated with the second version of the content into the media asset table.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein the data associated with the distribution of the first version of the content includes a unique content identification and a first license key.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein data associated with the distribution of the first version of the content further includes purchase data.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein data associated with the second version of the content includes a second purchase date, a second content identifier, and a second license key.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein the second version of the content has a different media format than the first version of the content.

36. The method of claim 29, further comprising receiving an indication of a fee to be charged by the content provider to provide the second version of the content.

37. The method of claim 36, further comprising receiving confirmation from the user to pay the fee to the content provider.

38. The method of claim 29, wherein the second version of the content and the second license key are distributed to the user.

39. The method of claim 29, wherein the request for modified content is received at a first computer site and wherein the second version of the content is stored at a second computer site associated with the content provider.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the second version of the content is communicated from the second computer site to the first computer site.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the second version of the content is a rights encoded copy of a media file.

42. A method of managing media content, the method comprising:
authenticating a subscriber to a content brokering site of a computer network;
providing device characteristics of a subscriber media device, the device characteristics communicated from the content brokering site to a remote content provider site;
receiving content site header data relating to media type from the remote content provider site; and
receiving media content and an associated license key allowing access to the media content from the remote content provider site.

43. The method of claim 42, further comprising storing the media type in a computer memory.

44. The method of claim 43, further comprising storing the media content in the computer memory.

45. The method of claim 42, further comprising distributing the media content to the subscriber media device.

46. The method of claim 42, wherein single sign-on credentials are used to perform the step of authenticating the subscriber.

47. The method of claim 42, wherein the subscriber device is one of a computer, a set top box, a DVD player and an MP3 player.

48. The method of claim 42, wherein the media file is selected from at least one of a movie file, a music file, and a software program.

49. The method of claim 42, further comprising authenticating a plurality of subscribers and receiving content requests from each of the plurality of subscribers.